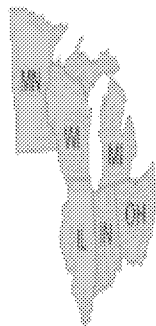


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Great Lakes

Region 5 Intelligence Briefing



November 8, 2021

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Great Lakes

Great Lakes Support Reauthorization Bill Introduced.

The *Scioto Post* (11/4, Newman) reports Sens. Rob Portman (R-OH), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), and Todd Young (R-IN) introduced a bill "to support fish and wildlife in the Great Lakes" by reauthorizing the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act. Portman said, "By reauthorizing this program through FY 2027, we are providing the Fish and Wildlife Service with the resources it needs to protect our Lakes and preserve our environment for generations to come." The legislation would reauthorize "\$6 million annually through FY 2027 to implement restoration projects" and "serve an important role in implementing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)."

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Illinois

EPA Report Finds Chicago Eastside "Overburdened" With Air Pollution.

Block Club Chicago (11/5) reports a new EPA Chicago air quality report "confirms the East Side is overburdened with air pollution – but it's still below the EPA's benchmark for concerning levels." EPA spokesperson Kate Siegel said "pollutants measured at George Washington High School [on E 114th Street] have either decreased or remained the same" in the last decade. The findings come as...activists "and neighbors continue to pressure the Chicago Department of Public Health to reject plans for" the opening of Southside Recycling, "a controversial metal scrapper at 11600 S. Burley Ave."

Opinion: Southside Recycling Opposition "Factually Unsupported."

In an op-ed in the *Washington Post* (11/4), Steve Joseph, CEO of the Reserve Management Group, parent company of Southside Recycling, says the newspaper's Oct. 23 front-page article "Scrap yard fuels long fight for Latino community" unfairly "tarred us with the environmental record of surrounding industries but refused to mention that we have responsibly operated recycling businesses for more than 20 years on property that we own." The new Southside Recycling "facility should be a national model for progress in environmentally responsible metal recycling, but it sits idle because the city and the Environmental Protection Agency have chosen to cave to factually unsupported opposition rather than follow their own established rules and issue our well-earned operating permit."

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Indiana

PCBs Found At Wastewater Treatment Facility.

The **Kokomo (IN) Tribune** (11/5) reports, "An expansion project at the Kokomo Wastewater Treatment Facility is on hold after tests revealed parts of the site are contaminated with toxic chemicals." Tests "earlier this year revealed the soil" at the redeveloped Superfund site "contained polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, at concentrations of 584 parts per million." Continental Steel Corp. "produced nails and wires from 1914 to 1986 on a 183-acre site, including where the wastewater plant sits now."

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Michigan

EPA Preparing To Test Water In 300 Benton Harbor Homes.

The **AP** (11/7) reports EPA officials "will soon start testing the water in 300 homes" in Benton Harbor in a process that "is expected to last several weeks." EPA Region 5 spokesperson Tera Fong told The Herald-Palladium, "It's about a 30-minute home visit."

The **St. Joseph (MI) Herald Palladium** (11/6, Wrege) reports Fong said the results of tests will be made available to residents as soon as they are ready. Thirteen residents "signed up to have the water in their homes tested during the Benton Harbor Water Resource Fair Thursday."

The **St. Joseph (MI) Herald Palladium** (11/5, Swidwa) reports the three-hour Benton Harbor Water Resource Fair "attracted a steady stream of residents" Thursday.

Detroit News (11/5, Hicks) reported, "Excavation work is slated to start next week in Benton Harbor as part of a plan to replace all of the city's lead pipes amid the drinking water crisis, state officials announced Friday." Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D) "has called for the line replacement in 18 months, and her administration has provided nearly \$20 million to the city for the effort, the state said in a statement."

WWJ-TV Detroit (11/5) reports, "Residents can expect to see construction within the city as Meeks Contracting Services begin to replace lines," funded by an EPA grant. Replacement of the lines "means both public (water main to curb) and private (curb to home) portions of the service line along with connections are all replaced."

MLive (MI) (11/5, Ellison) reports that among the shortcomings in the Benton Harbor water system detailed in the 43-page report released by the EPA last week are "alarming mechanical breakdowns with the plant's disinfection treatment, a process by which chlorine is added to kill harmful pathogens." EPA

Region 5 spokeswoman Taylor Gillespie “said the agency is working with the city to correct problems identified during the inspection and pointed to EGLE as the agency with primary responsibility for implementing Safe Drinking Water Act regulations.”

WVPE-FM Elkhart, IN (11/5, Dwyer) reports Benton Harbor Mayor Marcus Muhammad said, “The report from EPA is, you know, blaming the victim, which is the classic conclusion of environmental racism in America. Because if you’re going to diagnose the problem, but not come with solutions and funding, then your condemnation and your recommendation is a symbol without substance. ... But the damage and the wreckage had already been done and dealt by the left hand of the state.”

WKZO-AM Kalamazoo, MI (11/6, Malec), **WERE-AM** Cleveland (11/6), and **WXMI-TV** Grand Rapids, MI (11/5), **WJBK-TV** (11/5) and **WDIV-TV** (11/8) also report.

Only MI Employee Fired Because Of Flint Crisis Wins \$300K Settlement.

The **AP** (11/5) reports the state of Michigan “said Friday it agreed pay \$300,000 to settle wrongful discharge claims by” former head of the state’s drinking water division Liane Shekter Smith, “the only employee who was fired as a result of lead-contaminated water in Flint.” An arbitrator “said she was wrongly fired in 2016 by officials who were likely looking for a ‘public scapegoat’ in one of the worst environmental disasters in U.S. history.” Shekter Smith had been seeking more than \$900,000 in lost compensation.

Newsweek (11/5, Dybas) also reports.

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Wisconsin

Wisconsin BioFuels Association Supports Governors’ Letter On Biofuels.

The **Wisconsin Politics** (11/5) reports Wisconsin BioFuels Association President Erik Huschitt made a statement in support of the seven governors who sent a letter to EPA Administrator Michael Regan “inquiring about the steps necessary to implement a state-level solution to ensure E15 can be sold all year long.” Huschitt said, “Governor Evers and his administration has once again shown their support for the ethanol and biodiesel industries, as well as the consumers of our state by signing onto this letter. ... We are confident Governor Evers knows how essential it is to keep the Wisconsin consumer and agriculture industry strong and will do all he can to ensure E15 can continue to be sold all year long here.”

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